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## New-York Daily Tribune.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 1853.

The Administration begins to be frightened at the result of Mr. Bely's diplomacy in Central America, of which it has heard, not through the official representatives of this country in Nicaragua, but from the London papers. A demonstration, the precise character of which is as yet unknown, is meditated.

War is justly regarded by the thoughtful, intelligent and conscientious as at once among the most horrible of calamities and the most heinous of crimes. All the casualties, afflictions, disasters, of forty years of peace, are dwarfed by the devastations, butcheries, and miseries of a single great campaign. If a shell were to burst by accident in one of our streets to-day, and kill or mangle a dozen persons, the whole community would for days be convulsed with sympathetic emotion; but in war a thousand, five thousand, ten thousand shells are often exploded daily, shattering the skulls and scattering the brains and limbs of innocent women and children as though they were the vilest carrion, and nobody has time or thought for sympathy or sorrow. War transforms men into demons, eager to smite, to maim, to slay. In war, even invention, skill, genius—our noblest attributes—undergo a diabolical transformation, and are devoted to the continuance of engines of torture and destruction—chain-shot, shrapnel-shells, rockets, torpedoes, and similar devices for destroying the fruits of industry and defeating the image of God. There never was and never can be a war except through a fearful criminality on one side or on the other—often on both.

Nor is it so true as is generally supposed that the addition of kings and nobles, of generals and marshals, is the usual excitement to National hostilities. Rulers and chieftains have sins enough in this respect to answer for; but quite as many wars have been inaugurated and waged by civilians, as by soldiers—by demagogue aspiration as by crowned ambition. Scarcely one of the wars in which this country has been engaged, or which it has narrowly escaped, was mainly impelled by military disquietude; while popular passion, sedulously excited by demagogues eager for power or fame, has often impelled the President and Cabinet to belligerent attitudes and acts which their own unbiased judgment would have avoided. Only a very strong and very just ruler can bear the unjust stigma of pusillanimity and lack of spirit in asserting and maintaining the country's rights; it is always the safer course, so far as immediate popularity is regarded, to claim too much and go too far than to err, or seem to err, on the side of moderation and peace. A weak or wicked ruler, whose hold on power has become faltering and is palpably loosening, has always present to his mind the expedient of picking a quarrel with some rival power, and thereby drawing off public attention from his own evil deeds while he constrains those who condemn or have ceased to trust him to rally to his support under the fallacious and wicked cry, "Our country, right or wrong!"

It is an easy task to oppose war in the abstract—to dilate on its agonies and woes—to demonstrate its futility and its destructiveness; but to resist practically and habitually the schemes of its contrivers—to expose their acts and refute their fabrications—to step or turn aside the rills of war-incited influences are they unite to form an irresistibly impetuous river—to brave the demagogue's reproach of always taking the side of the enemy—this requires courage and devotedness of a higher order than that which charges belching batteries or rushes upon leveled bayonets. Yet there are calm, considerate, conscientious men even in this country to keep it out of any war henceforth, but one for the absolute and undeniable defense of its people's own homes and firesides, if those who love and live for peace will at all times speak out. It is not the superior strength but the superior volubility of the war-inciters that makes them seem so powerful. They always put themselves forward as exponents of the National sentiment and will, and assume to pledge the country to do this or resist that with a glib assurance that would be amusing if it were not mischievous.

—The *N. Y. Times*, speculating upon the gigantic armaments and probable intentions of the French emperor, thus concludes:

"All these movements taken together certainly warrant a suspicion that France is inclined to seize upon Central America—not by open and immediate conquest, but under the guise of a Protectorate, and by virtue of concessions from its Governments. It is not likely that the increase in her armies and fleets is due to this purpose alone, but it is quite certain that they will be exceedingly available for such an object, if it should be decided upon. When a prisoner at arms, he is the pressing necessity for a foreign war, for foreign conquests, or for some external adventure which shall divert the attention of the French people from their domestic affairs. The discussion of internal politics has of late become too unpopular to earn for its masters even our own country. The President may rely upon the cordial and unanimous support of the American people, in taking the most prompt and energetic measures to resist the aggressive movement of the adventurous Autocrat of France."

—Now if there is any power on earth against which we would gladly have our country involved in war, it is that of Louis Napoleon. Among earthly potentates, there is no greater villain than he—none whose downfall is more essential to the well-being of mankind. But this renders it neither right nor expedient that our country should be involved in war with him, while the pretext for hostilities imagined by *The Times* is utterly worthless. The States of Central America are free and independent communities, and as such at perfect liberty to contract such alliances and enter into such engagements with other powers respecting their own territories and resources as to them shall seem good. Whether such engagements on their part shall leave us or not, is not their affair, nor can their inherent right to manage their own concerns be overborne by any such consideration. But, above all, it will become *The Times*, which has championed by turns the Annexation of Cuba and the Protectorate of Mexico, to let loose the dogs of war because other States than Mexico choose to have a protector and do not choose to throw that responsibility on us. We are utterly opposed to any assumption of the Protectorate of Mexico by our Government; but we nevertheless insist that this is a question wholly between ourselves and Mexico—that, if we two should agree to a Protectorate, other Nations

would have no right to object. And what we affirm as a right in our own case, we cannot deny in the case of another. Let France "protect" Central America, if that be the will of the contracting parties; let France make the Inter-oceanic Ship Canal, if she will, and guard it ever so strongly. When constructed, she will need business to defray its heavy cost, and our ships will be ready to supply that business. Let her cut through the Isthmus of Suez also, if she will, and, if we have any trade in that direction, we will profit by her investment and her enterprise. Meanwhile, let us construct a great Iron Road through our own territory to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific; let us maintain friendly relations with Mexico and New Granada, and so enjoy the use of the Railroad already perfected at Panama; and that which is to be at Tehuantepec, and all that France can do in Central America need not trouble us in the least. When Adams and Clay directed the foreign policy of this country, the South American Republics asked us to meet them in friendly council to concert measures for our mutual security and benefit. We were then joyfully recognized as "the leading power on this Continent" by our sister Republics, though our Population, Army, Navy and Revenue were not half what they now are; and whenever we stop filibustering, plotting annexations and giving ourselves airs of superiority and protection, they will doubtless be ready to fraternize with us as cordially again.

The policy of abolishing our State's system of School Commissioners—one for each Assembly District (in other words, one for about every thirty thousand inhabitants), chosen by the legal voters thereof, at the annual State Elections—and retaining instead to the system of Town Superintendents, one for each Township, chosen by the legal voters thereof at the annual Town Election—is a subject which we have not chosen to discuss. Its discussion has been forced upon us by the agitators for the retrograde movement contemplated, no one of whom seems to be satisfied with his side of the question as presented by any other of its champions. The grumblers required the use of our columns to make known their grievance; we conceded it, but endeavored to briefly show that they were mistaken—that the new system was really better than that it supplanted. Our first response called out another, and our reply to this one developed still another malcontent—to no meaning suggesting or soliciting a word on our own side. We were content to rest the question on our first passage at arms; but our opponents were not: with them, it has been "one down, another come on." We cannot afford much space to this local controversy, but we give place herewith to the letter of "A Farmer"—much the fullest and best statement we have seen of the wrong side of the question. We shall herein reply in order to the points made by "A Farmer," and this must close the discussion, so far as *THE TRIBUNE* is concerned. The subject is by this time exhausted.

I. "A Farmer" proposes that each Township that chooses to do so may vote to discard Assembly District supervision and return to Town Superintendents. This is to give to a few Towns, containing a small minority of the People, power to break up the District system. Of course, we are utterly opposed to it. We believe the fact that a Township voted thus to withdraw from and disorganize a District would afford strong proof presumptive that District supervision is needed, and especially in that particular Town.

II. The State Superintendent surveys the whole ground—he sees the working of the Common-School system more broadly and thoroughly than any private citizen has opportunity to do—he notes defects and shortcomings in whatever quarter—he is unswayed by dread of tax or hope of a paltry office—and he ought to be a good judge in the premises. We were assured years since by the last State Superintendent—on whose recommendation the change now in question was made—that the Annual Reports which reached or should have reached him from the several Town Superintendents evinced not only gross incapacity but scandalous neglect of duty on the part of many of them—that their general character proved Town Superintendence a farce, and the impossibility of procuring even reliable and tolerably complete Annual Statistics of School Attendance through this means. From that hour, we have been opposed to Town Superintendence. It is dear even at half price.

III. There are regularly organized townships in our State containing less than fifty male adult citizens, none of them well educated, even in his own estimation. To say that these townships can and will elect Town Superintendents as capable and efficient as are likely to be chosen from an Assembly District containing twenty-five to thirty thousand inhabitants, is to defy every probability. But of course the less the examining officer knows, the easier it may be to procure his certificate. Hence Town Superintendents will always be preferred by aspirants to teach who have good reason to distrust their own qualifications.

IV. Every District Commissioner will naturally hold an examination of teachers at least annually in each township, and give due notice thereof. At least nineteen of every twenty teachers will here be examined. The cases in which teachers have to ride far in quest of the Commissioner who is to examine them must be exceptional and infrequent. —those of persons who are sick, or absent, or not expecting to teach when the regular examination took place. We ought not to upset a good system to accommodate this minute fraction.

V. That good Teachers make good Schools, is a sound proposition; but it requires efficient superintendence to insure good Teachers. And this is not all—the good Teacher needs some authority behind him to back his application for a pane of glass in the broken window, fuel that will burn, and a school-house that is not exactly out-of-doors. By and by, we want him to ask for a separate recitation room, some shade-trees around the school-house, and even a strip of playground where none is now provided. We care not what fund the Commissioner is paid from—we know that, should he devote his time mainly to his public duties (and no good citizen should vote for one who would not), he will be sure in time to bring about an improvement in the comfort, fitness, attractiveness, convenience, of nearly every school-house in his district. This will of course cost something; and the rigidly and miserly will complain of it; nay, they are now trying to break down the District system through apprehension of it. In this they may succeed, but not permanently.

VI. "A Farmer" does well to complain of rate-bills. We detest and have always opposed them—would like to abolish them to-morrow. If we taxed any for school purposes except as property-holders, we would present heavy rate-bills to those who kept their children out of school, not those who sent regularly. It was the very class who are now

clamoring for a return to Town Superintendence who broke down the Free-School system and sent us back to rate-bills.

VII. "A Farmer" forgets that the Town Superintendent was voted for in the middle of a long list of township officers, while the District Superintendent is voted for on a separate ballot deposited in a special box. "Vote the whole ticket!" "No Scratching!" &c., will here be of little avail.

VIII. The responsibility of creating or consolidating school districts, altering their boundaries, locating school-houses, &c., ought to devolve on some person or board not only competent but impartial—remote, so far as possible from local interest or influence. In this respect, District Supervision is decidedly preferable to Town.

—We have now done with the subject. The clamor of retrogradation have been fairly heard; we have endeavored fairly to answer them. We leave the subject with the People and the Legislature.

We have heretofore called attention to the case of Bayley against Poindexter's executor, lately decided by the Virginia Court of Appeals, followed up as it has been by the still more remarkable case of the will of Mrs. Coulter. These cases are characterized by *The Richmond Enquirer* as "the Dred Scott decision applied to slaves," and—perhaps with a little injustice to the Dred Scott decision—"as the most important cases to the institution of 'regro' slavery adjudicated since the times of Lord Mansfield." They are regarded both by that paper and other leading Virginia journals as signaling and significant of a complete revolution in the public opinion and policy of Virginia on the subject of Slavery—as in fact a proclamation by the State of Virginia, through its highest tribunal, that Slavery is detestable for the State, desirable for the slave and right in itself; that, in the eye of civil jurisprudence, a slave is a thing with none of the attributes or qualities of humanity; that it is best for him, best for the community and best for the world, that he should always continue a thing; and that it is the policy of Virginia to make Slavery perpetual.

This important result, involving, as it does and is admitted and boasted to do, the total overthrow of the opinions, sentiments, policy, wishes and expectations of the Revolutionary generation on the subject of Slavery, was not, however, arrived at without considerable struggle and straining; not greater, however, than might have been expected, considering the obstacles to be overcome. Mr. Poindexter, by his will, gave his slaves the choice of being emancipated, or sold at public auction for the benefit of his heirs. In the case of Pleasants vs. Pleasants, decided in 1850, and in that of Elders vs. Elders, in 1851, the Court had recognized the validity of wills giving to slaves an election between freedom and slavery, and had held the slaves to be emancipated by these wills. The legal profession throughout the State of Virginia had regarded these decisions as establishing the power of election in slaves, and under the authority of these decisions, wills had been drawn, and estates settled all over the Commonwealth. To upset this current of legal opinion and practice, might be attended with painful results. We do not refer to the Poindexter slaves, the retention of whom in slavery, was according to the views of the majority of the Court, a special benefit and favor to them, but to the executors who had acted under the authority of the decisions above cited, and who, if the law of those cases was overturned, might find themselves called upon to respond for the slaves whom they had suffered to go free. The case was first argued before the Court of Appeals, four Judges being on the bench, at the Spring term of 1857. Elaborate arguments were heard on both sides; but the Court, unable to come to a decision, said to be equally divided, adjourned to the Autumn session, when a fifth Judge took his seat on the bench. The case was then elaborately reargued in writing by the ablest counsel at the bar. To judge from the printed argument of Mr. John Howard, called in at this second hearing to aid in nullifying the will, the ground mainly, we may say exclusively, relied upon for overruling the case of Pleasants vs. Pleasants, was the change of opinion which had taken place in the State of Virginia since that decision was made. During the whole Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary period—such was the argument of Mr. Howard, rather in conflict, by the way, with Judge Taney's historical notions—a deep-seated conviction of the moral and political evils and injustice of Slavery very generally prevailed in Virginia. These sentiments of liberty, and that ardor for equal rights which had kindled and carried through the war of the Revolution were so general and pervading in the popular mind that although the natural rights of the negro race were not recognized in the formation of the State and General Government—that is, according to Mr. Howard's interpretation of those instruments—yet the minds and consciences of men were thoroughly awakened to the inequality and apparent wickedness of the condition of that race, and a spirit of honest, patriotic and philanthropic inquiry overpread the Commonwealth. As proofs of this, Mr. Howard refers to the speech of George Mason in the Federal Convention of 1787; to the bill in favor of gradual but universal emancipation reported by the committee for revising and remodeling the laws of Virginia, of which Wytke, Pendleton and Jefferson were members; to the act of 1782, repealing all restrictions on emancipation; to the oft-cited testimonies of Patrick Henry and Washington, the latter of whom, in a letter to Sir John Sinclair, written in 1776, refers to the statutes of Pennsylvania for the gradual abolition of Slavery as laws "which neither Maryland nor Virginia have at present, but which they must 'have, and at a period not remote;' to the warm recommendation of the abolition of Slavery, in a pastoral letter, in 1788, of the United Synod of New York and Philadelphia, which became seen after the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; to the rule of the Methodist Episcopal Church, then rapidly spreading in Virginia and Maryland, absolutely excluding slaveholders from membership; and to the fact that so late as 1803 St. George Tucker, at that time a Judge of the General Court of Virginia, and Professor of Law in William and Mary College, and afterward a Judge of the Court of Appeals, subjoined to his edition of Blackstone an appendix vindicating Virginia from "the reproach" of having fostered Slavery, elaborately pointing out the evils, wrongs and injustice of the system, and suggesting a detailed scheme for its safe, final and complete abolition.

Such were the law and the state of public opinion when, in the year 1850, Judge Roane delivered the decision of the Court in the case of Pleasants vs. Pleasants. Well might he say, "As it is the policy of the country to encourage and permit

emancipation, I reject to be a humble organ of the law in decreasing liberty to the numerous applicants before the Court"—"a policy," he adds in another place, "which has certainly received its sanction, and partly by the act of 1782, 'the countenance of the Legislature, and must 'always be dear to every friend of Liberty and the 'human race.'" Having thus accounted for the decision in Pleasants vs. Pleasants, the learned counsel then adverts to the complete change in public opinion which has since taken place. Scarcely half a century has passed away, and we find in that same Virginia, whose Henry and Jefferson and Mason and Wytke and Washington, all whose citizens, in fact, of that generation, who have left any mark behind them, were inspired with the high hope of the complete emancipation of the entire slave population of the State—a Constitutional provision prohibiting even the Legislature itself from setting free a single slave; expelling from the Commonwealth all hereafter set free by their owners; giving power to the Legislature not merely to restrict but to take away entirely the power of emancipation; giving like authority to reduce the whole free negro population to perpetual Slavery, not only with but without their own consent; and to crown all, a legislative act providing a solemn legal mode for such reduction into Slavery, and a still further act inflicting fines and imprisonment upon any person who shall be so bold as to dare to maintain, in the spirit if not in the very words of the patriots above referred to, that Virginia masters have not the right of property in their slaves.

"Was there ever," asks Mr. John Howard, "a more radical, thorough and all pervading revolution in any system of laws, upon any subject of legislation, or a more complete and universal contrast presented by public policy and public sentiment in any matter of general concern?" Wise and prophetic, even to inspiration, as were "the great fathers of the Republic and the illustrious statesmen of Virginia, their vision failed and faltered in the perspective of the vast, the immense and manifold agency of the institution of African Slavery in developing the untold and 'immeasurable resources of this continent, in 'building up the solid foundations of social order and public prosperity in the Southern States, in 'enriching and sustaining all the industrial interests of the entire Union, in magnifying the 'commerce and manufactures, and advancing 'and upholding the civilization of the world.' The fact is, according to Mr. John Howard, these ages of the Revolution had not seen nor even imagined "the general socialistic and destructive 'tendencies of free society," "the disorder, distress, lawlessness and anarchy of that community, in which the Constitution and laws, State and Federal, are subordinated to the passions and 'caprices of ungovernable masses, hounding for 'bread, and mud with fanaticism." A vast change since their day has been wrought in the public mind—a change, as Mr. Howard argues, from certain recent articles in *The London Times*, extending even to England. Instead of undermining and abolishing the institution of Slavery, it had become the policy of Virginia to establish and perpetuate it, and the decision of the Court in the present case ought to be made to conform to this change of policy.

This argument appears to have prevailed with three out of the five Judges; two Judges, Samuel and Moncure, dissented, the latter sustaining himself in an able and able opinion, which however has, we believe, not yet been published. The same two Judges also dissented from the decision in the case of Mrs. Coulter's will—a decision directly in the face and eyes of the case of Osborne vs. Taylor, decided only a few years ago, and still more clearly evincing than even the Poindexter case, the determination of the majority of the Virginia Court of Appeals to make the policy of perpetuating Slavery the basis of all their future decisions. Probably the decisions already pronounced will be made the basis for again reducing to Slavery a large part of the free negro population of Virginia. Most of the wills under which they or their ancestors were set free no doubt contain some clause giving, or which can be construed to give, them a right to remain slaves if they prefer it—quite sufficient, according to the decision in the Coulter case, to make the will void so far as they are concerned.

The *Pittsburgh Gazette* objects to our paragraph expressing a hope that the Republicans of the XXth District of Pennsylvania would support Mr. Montgomery's reelection, on grounds already indicated by our Harrisburg correspondent. It says: "Up to the point when English turned traitor and carried the appointment of the Conference Committee, Mr. Montgomery remained in his seat, during the fight, but when the fight was over, he was expected to do his duty—while at the services of the leaders against Lincoln were made, he never needed—Mr. Montgomery, to whom the law had been assigned, paired off with a mere nobody—some obscure fellow from Arkansas named Warren—abandoned his struggling associates and started for home, where he remained ever since. Was this doing the fair thing? If he had paired off with Stephen A. Lincoln, there would have been equality in the result; but a general to pair off with a poor private, and that on the very eve of the final and decisive engagement! Is it for that he 'has nobly done' 'served a reelection'?"

But let us leave the rest of our objection to the advice of Mr. Montgomery. After the English wind had passed, Mr. Montgomery issued an address to his constituents, in the form of a letter to one of them, in which he boldly laid claim to the English winds as his bill, taking exception only to that part of it which gave an advantage to Kansas an open question for the future, and congratulated the country on the amicable settlement of the question upon the basis of his amendment, and on the fact that the Kansas question was thereby through his instrumentality, removed from national politics."

This certainly presents Mr. Montgomery in a different aspect from that in which we regarded him when we wrote our former paragraph. And the worst of the matter is that we fear this aspect is the true one. Aside from his ultimate defection on the Kansas question and his open adhesion to the English dog, we have seen two recent letters from his pen, full of such low lived office-begging as this: "I love the noble, true-hearted Democracy of Greene County, and would be the last man to do to them or their candidate injustice. I only ask from them one term more, to make me equal with those who have been so long in the field, and then I will leave the field for a candidate they may present, and I now pledge him my hearty support—not for one but for two terms. To deny me what has been conceded to all my predecessors, is to pronounce me less worthy than them. It would be an imputation on my honor—a reflection on my conduct which would grieve me much, &c."

—Enough! A man who can get down on his face and eat dirt after that fashion for nothing but a beggary office, is not fit for a hog-rove. We retract all we have ever said in favor of Montgomery, and hope he may be defeated whoever may succeed him.

ILLINOIS.—Mr. Douglas's home organ, *The Chicago Times*, gives a list of fifty-nine journals in that State which repudiate the Leecompton test, two unaccounted for, and six who "go in" for Buchanan. Of the latter, one is edited by a Postmaster, one by a mail agent, one by a Leecompton nominee, one bought for \$117,

and two owned by Postmasters. The editors of the two yet unaccounted for are to be appointed Postmasters.

## THE LATEST NEWS.

RECEIVED BY MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH.

From Washington.

SPECIAL DISPATCHES TO THE N. Y. TRIBUNE, From a Special Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, June 24, 1853.  
The Post-Office appointments in New York will probably be decided upon in the Cabinet to-morrow. There is a great pressure on the President. The present inclination is to distribute the spoils between the two factions, though the Sells have the inside track.

The Administration meditates a demonstration against Nicaragua and Costa Rica. It is believed in diplomatic circles that Mr. Bely acted under secret instructions from Louis Napoleon, though he has no official position. The nomination of Marcolletta as Minister to France confirms this conviction. Instructions were sent from Nicaragua to Marcolletta by the last steamer.

A strong disposition is now entertained to displace Dr. Leis, from the apprehension that his proceedings in Illinois may lead to party distractions elsewhere.

To the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, June 24, 1853.  
Mr. Dallas, in the course of his dispatch, dated the 8th of June, alluded to a conversation he had had with Lord Melbourne, to whom, following the spirit of his instructions, he refused to make any concessions whatever in relation to "visit or search," and he was about to end his letter with the report of an unfavorable issue of the interview, when he was abruptly supplied with a sudden change in affairs, and Lord Melbourne, himself, at the request of Mr. Dallas, wrote the minutes of another conversation, in which he fully accepted the doctrine in the letter of Secretary Cass, of the 10th of April, as sound international law, but as conflicting with the Treaty of 1842.

The States this afternoon understand from a reliable source that the President has determined to send an armed force to Nicaragua, or at least make such a naval display as will convince the Governments of England and France that our way to our Pacific possessions is not to be interfered with, and adds, "This intelligence may be relied on."

## Congressional Nomination.

CINCINNATI, Thursday, June 24, 1853.  
The Hon. James Wilson, R-Republican, was to-day nominated for reelection from the XVIII Indiana Congressional District.

## Reform Convention.

RETAIL, Thursday, June 24, 1853.  
The great Reform Convention commences here to-morrow, and will continue three days. Mrs. Frances D. Gage is lecturing here this evening. Subject: "Matters of Interest." A large tent set of Grove street is well filled with nervous reformers and persons from a distance, who have just arrived to attend the Convention.

## Masonic Celebration.

BOSTON, Thursday, June 24, 1853.  
St. John's Day was